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REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY (RCP)

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- Maoist group formed in 1974 as an offshoot of the Progressive Labor Party
- Seeks the violent destruction of America's capitalist economic system
- Called for the assassination of President Reagan in 1984
- Was a key instigator of the 1992 Los Angeles race riots

The Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) is the premier Maoist party in the United States. Its earliest roots can be traced to June 1, 1962, when, in the immediate aftermath of that year's Sino-Soviet split, approximately fifty members and ex-members of the U.S. Communist Party met at the Hotel Diplomat in New York. Favoring the Chinese brand of Communism over its Russian counterpart, these radicals founded the Progressive Labor Movement (PLM) to promote their political views. By 1966, the several-hundred-strong PLM renamed itself the Progressive Labor Party (PLP), which, at its first convention, decided to join forces with the radical [Students for a Democratic Society](#) (SDS). But PLP shunned the counter-culture image of SDS and opposed the latter's calls for student revolution -- urging young people instead to avoid doing anything that would alienate fellow students or their communities. PLP tried unsuccessfully to take over SDS's National Office, thereby pushing SDS even further to the political left -- toward hard-line Maoism. Opposition to PLP tactics led to the formation of yet another Maoist group, the Revolutionary Youth Movement, which eventually split into two factions -- one becoming the notorious terrorist group [Weatherman](#); the other spawning a 1969 splinter group called the Bay Area Revolutionary Union (co-founded by [Robert Avakian](#), [H. Bruce Franklin](#), and Charles Hamilton), which would become the Revolutionary Communist Party in 1974.

RCP's "[Draft Program](#)" consists of the following major tenets:

- "Of all the tyrants and oppressors in the world, there is none that has caused more untold misery and committed more screaming injustices against the people of the world than the rulers of the U.S. This is a country founded on genocide and slavery. ... The rulers of the U.S. have plundered and slaughtered their way to the top position within the worldwide system of capitalist-imperialism -- a system of global exploitation, of political and military domination, and of murderous rivalry among the imperialist powers themselves."
- "The imperialists in their endless quest to turn everything into a means for private profit, and in their monstrous methods of warfare to enforce and extend their domination ... generally wreak havoc on the earth and its resources. ... To bring down this system is the urgent need of the world's exploited and oppressed. In the U.S. itself, it is our special challenge and responsibility to make revolution, at the earliest

possible time, right within the belly of this most powerful imperialist beast ... as part of the world proletarian revolution."

- "The ultimate goal and the historic mission of the proletariat is communism, a world in which human beings are no longer divided into classes. ... Socialist revolution will put an end to the profit-over-all, expand-or-die insanity of capitalism. ... As the crucial first step in this, the new proletarian power will immediately seize and socialize ownership of the major means of production -- that is, convert them into the common property of the people, in the form of state ownership or collective ownership by large groups of working people. The state will also institute socialist economic planning to consciously regulate and guide social production to serve the masses and revolution."

RCP considers capitalism the root cause of the world's most destructive social ills, such as: (a) *Racism*: "The history of the development of capitalism in the U.S. is a history of the most savage oppression of the Black, Native American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Hawaiian, Asian, and other oppressed peoples"; (b) *Discrimination Against Immigrants*: "Millions of undocumented immigrants live in the shadows of U.S. society without the most basic rights ... Entire groups of immigrants, such as Arabs, are scapegoated and demonized, and non-European immigrants generally are targets of racism; and (c) *Subjugation of Women*: "In the face of the brutal oppression of women and the traditional thinking of thousands of years, the proletariat will make dramatic changes upon coming to power."

In RCP's calculus, "revolutionary war" is the only means by which people can ultimately be freed from capitalism's shackles. Says RCP: "Marx once noted that 'Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with the new.' The old ruling classes have never voluntarily stepped down from power. ... Thus the proletariat must overthrow and thoroughly smash and dismantle the bourgeois state. And that requires war. In the words of [Mao \[Zedong\]](#): 'A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another.' War brings with it great bloodshed and destruction, and the proletariat will ultimately abolish war. But this will be done, and can only be done, by abolishing the system of capitalist accumulation and class oppression that constantly gives rise to war."

The early to mid-1980s were a time of intense activity for RCP. In the summer of 1983, the organization set up terrorist training camps in Colorado, drawing people from the Iranian Student Association and the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) -- the latter of which is known for its involvement in heroin trafficking. Police have also linked the RCP to heavy-weapons-trafficking endeavors carried out in unison with the Ohio-based "Outlaws" motorcycle gang.

In October 1983, RCP tried to sabotage American efforts to deploy Pershing and cruise missiles in Germany. Toward that end, the noted RCP member [C. Clark Kissinger](#) led a "World Without Imperialism Contingent" (WWIC) on an eight-week tour of Germany to lay the framework for these efforts. Accompanied by members of Peru's Marxist guerrilla army, the Shining Path, Kissinger and his RCP comrades penetrated Mutlangen U.S. military base in West Germany, where Pershing II intermediate-range missiles were stored. In November of that year, RCP / WWIC members were involved, along with Red Cells and other German anarchist-terrorists, in an assault against Vice President George Bush's caravan during the latter's visit to Krefeld, Germany. Two months thereafter, the RCP newspaper *Revolutionary Worker* (renamed *Revolution* in 2005) called for the assassination of President Ronald Reagan.

This was approximately the period during which RCP sought to establish

alliances with radical environmentalist organizations, as exemplified by its November 22, 1983 joint public meeting with representatives of [Greenpeace](#). RCP's radical agendas found further expression when the Party sponsored the March 12, 1984 founding conference of the [Revolutionary Internationalist Movement](#) in London.

Throughout its history, one of RCP's principal objectives has been to foment civil unrest in the United States. The most notable example of such efforts occurred on April 29, 1992, when RCP members looted and trashed the downtown and government districts of Los Angeles, [triggering](#) the infamous Rodney King riots. During the days immediately preceding the violence, RCP -- which maintained close ties to the L.A. gangs known as the Crips and the Bloods -- had circulated throughout South Central Los Angeles a leaflet featuring a statement by RCP National Spokesman [Carl Dix](#), titled "It's Right To Rebel" -- a quote popularized by Mao Zedong. Encouraged by Dix, RCP activists helped lead the riots that would leave 58 people dead, more than 2,300 people injured, some 5,300 buildings burned, and \$1 billion in property damaged or destroyed. On the ten-year anniversary of the rioting, RCP member Joseph Veale [fondly recalled the violence](#) as "the most beautiful, the most heroic civil action in the history of the United States."

[Robert Avakian](#) is RCP's Founder and current "Chairman-in-Exile." As a result of 1981 criminal indictments issued against him and several other RCP leaders for their break-in to White House grounds during a presidential ceremony, Avakian and his cohorts fled to Paris, where they have been living ever since. From his Parisian base, Avakian continues to agitate for the violent overthrow of the U.S. government. RCP National Council member [C. Clark Kissinger](#) in 1987 founded the group [Refuse & Resist](#) to serve as a recruiting office for RCP. More recently, he created the organizations [Not In Our Name](#) and [World Can't Wait](#).

In late 2005, RCP launched its Revolutionary Communist Speaking Tour, designed to "build a communist movement among the people locked on the bottom of society in the current era of Bushite Christian-fascism." The organization further disseminates its message via literature that is distributed by [Revolution Books](#), which operates a number of stores nationally.

In 2014, RCP [was](#) a key [organizer](#) of protest demonstrations denouncing two recent incidents where black men -- 18-year-old Michael Brown in Missouri and 43-year-old Eric Garner in New York -- had died as a result of altercations with white police officers. (For a brief overview of those incidents, [click here](#).) As one RCP [flyer](#) in San Francisco said:

"...There's countless videos where these fuckin' pigs wantonly murder people right in front of a camera knowing they're being recorded! What the fuck is it gonna take to get these muthafuckers to stop?! The answer is Revolution — Nothing Less! Nothing less than overthrowing the capitalist-imperialist system that they so viciously serve and protect...

"This shit has to stop and you can be part of stopping it. All these pigs, all the courts, all the prisons are there not because they want to keep our communities safe, all that shit is there because they fear YOU! They know what you rising up and not staying in your place could turn into. They fear what your righteous anger and your unwillingness to just bow down to their illegitimate authority represents. They fear your potential to transform and become the gravediggers of this system and that's why they hate you! A pig killed Eric Garner with his bare hands, enraged because the big Black man didn't follow orders

and call him "sir"! That's why they killed him! That's why they killed Oscar Grant! That's why they killed Ezell Ford! And that's why they MURDERED Michael Brown! They fear you inspiring others with your rebelliousness, with your outrage, with your refusal to just keep taking this shit. But more than they fear you joining others in righteous protest, more than they fear you breaking windows, burning buildings, or flipping over a fuckin' cop car, more than they fear even another LA Rebellion, they fear you coming together as an organized revolutionary force to overthrow their rotten fuckin' system.

"...If we fight for meaningless reforms, they get what they want. If we turn away from revolution and the leadership of the Revolutionary Communist Party, they get what they want. They get us walking around in circles aimlessly without any real clarity about the problem and much less the solution. And while now is not the time to go all out for revolution, now IS the time to resist, now IS the time to fight back, now IS the time to build the movement FOR revolution, and now is the time to strengthen the organized force that will lead that revolution. ..."

Other key organizers of the protests included the Occupy Wall Street movement, the Progressive Labor Party, the ANSWER coalition, the NAACP, the New Black Panther Party, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, the SEIU, national LGBT organizations, climate environmentalists, amnesty groups, pro-Palestinian organizations, and Christian social justice groups.

Today RCP calls for black Americans to unite into a separate, autonomous republic in the American South, which it calls "the southern part of the former imperialist United States of America." The decision to form such a republic would be made by "a special vote in which only African-Americans would be eligible to participate." This ambition is a descendant of the Communist International's call, in 1930, for the creation of a Soviet-directed and controlled "Negro Republic" among America's Southern states.

RCP currently maintains offices in sixteen U.S. metropolitan areas: Atlanta, Baltimore, Cambridge/Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Honolulu, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, Philadelphia, Portland [Oregon], San Francisco/Berkeley, Seattle, and Washington D.C. It is also active in Western Europe, particularly in England, France, and Germany.